

The specimen, an adult ♀, measures: Head and body 300 mm, tail 248 mm, hindfoot 52 mm, ear 23 mm. The number of mammae are 3 pairs (1 abdominal + 2 inguinal).

The specimen was examined for endoparasites. Nothing was found except 2 ♂♂ and 1 ♀ examples of a strongylid nematode worm from the rectum. These worms are of special interest because they constitute the first record of nematode worm from the rectum of an Indian mongoose and exhibit quite different morphological characters than the nematodes *Pulmostrongylus fengi* Hsü, 1935, known from the lung of the Crab-eating Mongoose, *Herpestes urva* (Hodgson), *P. herpestis* (Khera 1956) Yeh 1958, from the pleural cavity of the Small Indian Mongoose, *Herpestes auro-punctatus* (Hodgson), *Herpestostrongylus herpestis* Khera, 1956, from the body cavity, lung and gall-bladder of the Common Mongoose, *Herpestes edwardsi* (Geoffroy), and *Arthrocephalus herpestis* Khera, 1956, from the small intestine of the Ruddy Mongoose, *Herpestes smithi* Gray. The specimens also show a great deal of difference from the nematodes, *Rictularia* sp. (= *Diserratosomus mungoosii* Mirza, 1938) and *Spirura marayani* Mirza and Basir, 1938, from the intestine and stomach respectively of *Herpestes mungo* [= *Herpestes edwardsi* (Geoffroy)]. However, of the abovementioned nematode genera known from the mongoose, the present three specimens show strong affinity to the genus *Herpestostrongylus* Khera, 1956. The specimens are currently under study by one of the authors (Y.C.).

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R. K. GHOSE
Y. CHATURVEDI

4. NOTES ON THE BARASINGHA, *CERVUS DUVAUCELI* *BRANDERI*, IN THE KANHA NATIONAL PARK

In former times the southern subspecies of Barasingha, *Cervus duvauceli branderi*, was common in wide areas of Central India. Due to heavy shooting and destruction of the habitat Barasingha has experienced a drastic decline since the last century. In 1938, 3023 animals were counted during a census by the forest department in the Kanha National Park (Mandla Dist., M.P.)

Today the population in Kanha N.P. is reduced to 70 to 80 animals. It is most probably the last remnant surviving of the southern subspecies of Barasingha. Unless adequate protection is provided, this population will reach the point of no-return soon.

In recent years several conjectures have been made on the possible limiting factors in the Kanha-population of Barasingha. Schaller (1967)¹ suggests the disease brucellosis and heavy predation by man and tiger as possible reasons for the decline of the population.

Barasinghas disappear yearly from the central open areas of the Kanha N.P. shortly after the monsoon rains have ceased and remain almost undiscoverably scattered in different areas until the beginning of the rutting season in mid-December. This was considered to be the most critical period in their annual cycle, but only a few reliable data were available on their habits during this season.

In April 1971 the World Wildlife Fund raised, funds for a Barasingha-project in Kanha, with the intention of obtaining reliable data on the decline of the Barasingha-population, the causes and possible remedies.

Cervus duvauceli branderi is a species which is mainly confined to open high-grass areas growing along water courses, but has expanded its range to a variety of forest types too. The present project intends to gather information on all ecological and environmental aspects of the surviving population.

In connection with this, the composition and distribution of the endemic grass-flora was studied. The Kanha-meadows have been burned yearly since the beginning of this century to prevent later uncontrolled fires. However, whereas some species of grass-flora adapt themselves to annual burning others are killed off and therefore it is likely that the flora is in a continual state of change. Annual burning is certainly one of the main influences on the endemic grass-flora.

This year an obvious difference in density as well as in the composition of the grass-flora between the Kanha-meadows and other open areas was found. Species such as *Themeda triandra* or *Apluda mutica*, which are of importance for most of the ungulates in the park, have disappeared from wide areas of the Kanha-meadows whereas they occur still in maximum height and density in smaller open areas somewhat distant from the Kanha-meadows. Other, mostly smaller or annual grasses occur more frequently in the Kanha-meadows, but they cannot make up for the lost species. The result is a general poor growth of grasses as far as density, height and composition is concerned.

This does not remain without reaction on the ecology of the animals in the park. It may have detrimental effects on the migration pattern of an endangered species, especially if the species shows such a

¹ SCHALLER, G. (1967) : The Deer and the Tiger. Chicago & London.

distinct preference for dense high-grass areas as Barasingha does after the monsoon. This fact seems to be of great importance.

On the other hand it stands to reason that the present remnants of the Barasingha in the Kanha N.P. should not be taken as representative for the conditions in former times. The last population of *Cervus duvauceli branderi* lives isolated, with no contact with either other populations or other possible habitats in the surroundings.

Thus as far as they can be reconstructed the requirements of past populations have to be compared with the present ecological conditions. After these considerations only can we decide whether the present habitat in Kanha N.P. corresponds with the needs of the Barasingha and in what form corrections should be undertaken.

In June 1970 a 69-acre enclosure with tiger-safe wire-mesh had been completed in Kanha, enclosing an area of 2/3 grassland and 1/3 Sal-forest (*Shorea robusta*) and offering adequate opportunity to the Barasingha to breed under natural conditions. Moreover it facilitates the recording of the feeding habits and other ecological facts. Two hinds and two stags were introduced into the enclosure in August 1970. A male fawn was born in the enclosure the following month.

In August 1971 one pregnant hind was added to the enclosed group. Its fawn was born in mid-September.

Thus the enclosed group now consists of 2 adult stags, 1 yearling stag, 3 hinds and the recently born fawn. This represents a small breeding herd of a good composition, which promises to increase by further births within the next year.

UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH,
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CLAUDE MARTIN

5. AN EXAMPLE OF 'PAGET'S POCHARD' FROM INDIA

(With a plate)

'Paget's Pochard' was the name originally given to the hybrid between the Pochard *Aythya ferina* (Linnaeus) and the Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* (Linnaeus).

Through the kindness of Mr. J. C. Daniel, of the Bombay Natural History Society, we have been asked to examine and report on an example already correctly identified as this hybrid. It is a drake and was netted on February 15th 1968 at Ghana Sanctuary, Bharatpur, India and is registered as No. 126-68 in the collection of the Bombay Natural History Society.